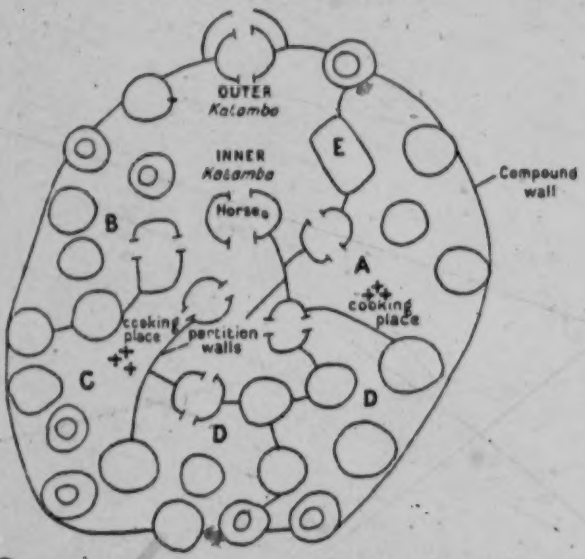
1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

592 596 altogether. Thus one 'house' (in the abstract sense) may be found distributed over a number of adjacent compounds, occupying a part or the whole of the separate cluster of compounds which constitutes the subdivision of the Nupe village, and is called *efu*—a term best translated with 'village ward'. Or we may find separate small hamlets, called *tunga*, which are regarded as dependencies of the original house and village.

HOUSE OF A VILLAGE CHIEF

[372]



○ Sleeping huts ◯ Kotamba A... partition of family head. B... partition of unmarried sons. C... partition of unmarried daughters. D... partition of married sons and younger brothers. E... sleeping hut of family head. ◎ Granaries.

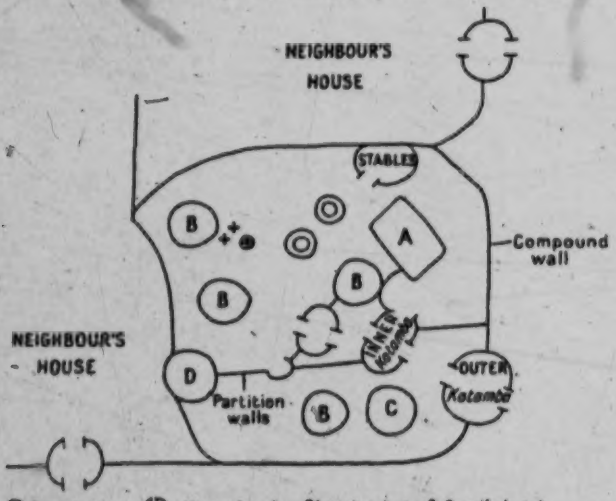
[621] Both terms, *efu* and *tunga*, will play a considerable part in our discussions of the Nupe community. The fluid transition between 'house' and 'ward' is reflected in the often synonymous use of the two terms: thus the quarter of the blacksmiths (*twata*) in a certain village will be known both as *emi* and *efu twata*, or the part of the village in which the chief (*Žitsu*) resides both as *emi* and *efu Žitsu*. Decrease in the size of the kinship group (owing to death or emigration), on the other hand, may cause the break-up of the house-group and lead the people to abandon their home altogether. Individuals who are left without a large family may join friends or neighbours as adopted members of their house.

592 596 369 In Bida the situation is altered by a number of circumstances peculiar to the urban society. Space for local expansion being limited, families are much more widely scattered than in the village, even beyond the

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

The family has been regarded by many anthropologists as a typical *bilateral* unit—a group in which the transmission of rights and duties follows both the paternal and maternal line. We know now that such family structures are extremely rare, and that in most societies succession in paternal and maternal line supplement each other and are assigned different spheres of validity, certain rights and duties being transmitted in the paternal and others in the maternal line. For the Nupe family we

HOUSE OF A BIDA NOBLEMAN OF LOW RANK



○ Sleeping huts ⊂⊃ Kotamba. A... Sleeping hut of family head.
B... Sleeping huts of his wives. C... Sleeping hut of unmarried son.
D... Sleeping hut of unmarried daughter. ● Well. ◎ Granaries.

can say that rights and duties which are transmitted through the father greatly outweigh in scope and importance those transmitted through the mother. Kinship membership itself and the access to the political and religious rights vested in it are determined by paternal descent. As women in Nupe neither own nor work land, this most important property is also inherited through the father. The rights to certain forms of financial support (e.g. for the payment of bride-price or support in old age) are equally derived from descent in the father's line. As Radcliffe-Brown has shown, the genealogical division into paternal and maternal succession depends also on the nature of the rights and duties that are transmitted from individual to individual, some being transmitted more satisfactorily through men (i.e. the father) and others through women (i.e. the mother).[1] Thus the personal property of the Nupe women is inherited by their daughters—as the personal property

[1] R. A. Radcliffe-Brown, 'Patrilineal and Matrilineal Succession', *Iowa Law Review*, xx, 1935.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

342
361

COMPOUNDS IN KUTIGI

JEBBA ISLAND

[facing p. 36]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

621 also explains why *tunga* settlements rarely (if ever) develop into real 'towns'. The factor of size and numbers, too, plays its part. In order to provide that self-contained social and political life that is typical of the Nupe 'town', and in order to afford its inhabitants the political security which is part of the *raison d'être* of that form of settlement, a much larger concentration of people is necessary than the village *tunga* is likely ever to achieve in a sparsely populated country with so low a birth-rate. But the attitude of the people is as important: they cannot conceive of a *tunga* becoming an *eźi*—a rival settlement to their mother-town. The village *tunga* has no social life of its own: it possesses no market, no independent political organization, often no age-grades of its own, and celebrates its feasts and ceremonies with the 'mother-town'. 'Towns', on the other hand, are independent, self-contained units, which have little in common with each other, and often know nothing of their next-door neighbours. To become a 'town' would thus mean for the *tunga* to deny the very essence of its social identity.

Every village then counts, 'owns' as the Nupe say, a certain number of colonies, which surround it in a radius of six to seven miles, right up to the point where the area of the next village begins. Kutigi, for example, possesses six *tunga* settlements founded between 1860 and 1910. Five were founded by people from the two largest *efu* of Kutigi, one by people from Etsú, a neighbouring 'town', who preferred to settle on the more open and fertile land of Kutigi. Doko, a much smaller village but situated in a more densely populated area, owns nine large *tunga* settlements and a number of smaller, secondary, dependencies. Two of the large *tunga* settlements were founded by people of the Cekpã sub-tribe who fled from their homes during the Yoruba wars and settled in more peaceful Beni country. The other seven are village colonies proper. Interspersed between these colonies of Doko are four 'private' *tunga* settlements, founded by slaves and other dependants of Bida landlords.

The following examples may illustrate the organization of two comparatively recently founded *tunga* settlements:

Zaboru, a *tunga* near Sakpe, consisting of two compounds, was founded by the man Zaboru, together with his elder brother, the present Village Head of Sakpe, about thirty years ago. The two men went out together to find a place with new farm-land, and built first temporary, later permanent huts. The elder brother returned to Sakpe after the death of their father to assume his position as the new head of the family. In his place a third, youngest, brother, who had just married, went out to the *tunga*, about ten years ago, where he is still living.

Shebe Woro, belonging to the 'town' Shebe and consisting of two compounds, was founded in 1933, when a certain Kolo left Shebe 'because the place was too full'. Together with some relations and two friends he occupied a new place, about three miles away, deeper in the bush, and founded there the settlement now called Shebe Woro, which means, New Shebe.

● 342 361 Let us now go inside a Nupe village. I have described already its typical lay-out—the scattered *efu* and the walled compounds or 'houses'

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

which make up the *efu*. The Nupe house consists of a number of huts, mostly round, built of clay and thatched with grass, which are surrounded by a high mud wall. The wall opens upon the path or open space in front of the house in the *katamba*, a hut more spacious than the rest, with big doors which make the *katamba* a gateway or entrance-hall of the compound. Inside the house are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba*, all invisible from outside. You only see the tops of the grass roofs protruding from behind the compound wall. Sometimes the house of a chief is built in a different, more imposing style with a large square or semicircular *katamba* which has a high gabled roof and windows let into the walls. Often huts or entrance-halls are decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Some houses are more beautifully decorated than others—a sign both of difference in prosperity and in ambition or aesthetic leanings. There are the signs of occupational specialization: one or two blacksmiths' furnaces; a house decorated with crude plastics in relief of animals, or with a pair of horns surmounting the roof—a hunter's place; a platform of dyeing pits in one corner of the village, and perhaps the half-open sheds of the weavers. To-day one small mosque at least is found in every village of Nupe. Pagan sacred shrines or sacrifice places are mostly hidden inside the houses; only in the riverain villages did I find a sacred shrine placed in the open, in the middle of the village. The sacred groves where the annual sacrifices are performed are always some distance away from the village, hidden in the thin bush and brushwood which surround the village. Most villages are situated near a watercourse, be it only a little stream or brook. From here the women fetch the water, and here you may see them at all hours of the day washing dishes and calabashes or laundering their clothes. There are also wells in most of the villages, well-dug deep wells—the Nupe are excellent well-builders—with a strong timber framework and a solid, clean platform round the mouth of the shaft; standing on the platform, the women draw water in buckets or earthenware pots tied to long ropes of native hemp. The big, round roasting-ovens of clay which look like huge red eggs scattered on the outside of the village, and in the bigger places the square of open booths which forms the market, complete the picture of the Nupe village. Once or twice a week this square is overflowing with people, men and women of all ages: they buy and sell, they listen or dance to the music of drummers and flute-players, they have their heads shaved, they talk, chat, cry out their wares. They are a mixed crowd, and the nearer the village is to the main roads of the country, the more mixed it is: people from the village, peasants from the *tunga* near-by, traders from Bida, travellers and occasional visitors from places and countries far away.

The market gathering is not the village community. Yet the boundary of what we have called the area of common life is, of necessity, fluid. It is redrafted and reset with every new bond of contact and every new channel of communication. But we may say this: the village and its dependencies form the core of this area of common life. Between them takes place the intensive life of the community, of regular and habitual co-operation in all spheres of life. Within this area marriages are arranged,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

342 ●
531

A VILLAGE *KATAMBA*

A *KATAMBA* IN BIDA

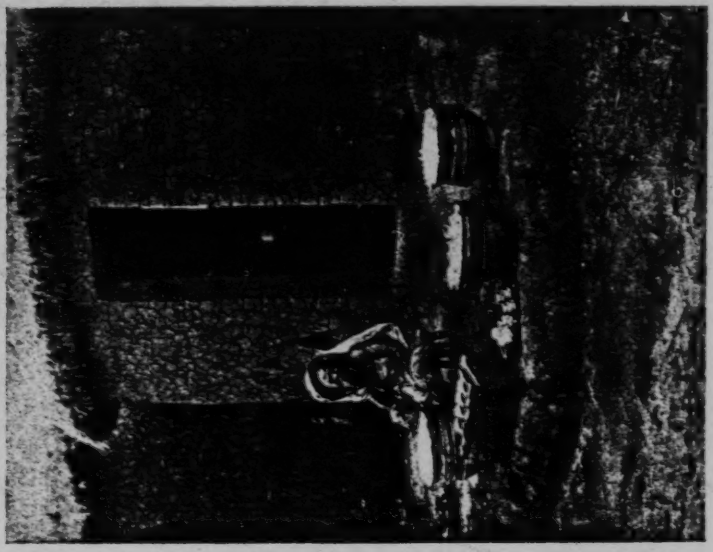
[facing p. 38]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

enter the native town. In the town as it presents itself to the eyes of the visitor there are but few traces of modern influence. There are the modern roads, metalled, with stone parapets and bridges of concrete. But the houses which line the streets are still the same century-old Nupe houses: the big, naked wall enclosing the compound and, hidden behind it, the array of small thatched huts. As in the village, the compound wall opens upon the street in the *katamba*, the gateway or entrance-hall of the Nupe house. Its style and lay-out and the state it is in indicate better than anything else the status and position of the people who live there. There are the round gateways of the wealthy, some painted black, some in gay colours, with ornaments worked in relief into the clay, and the roomy gateways of the royal princes, with window recesses, and pillars and buttresses to support the high-gabled roof. Some *katamba* have raised platforms in front of the door, carefully levelled, and stained with the juice of the locust-bean which gives them the appearance of smooth asphalt. Others have coloured earthenware plates inlaid in the clay of the wall; others show, worked in relief, figures and emblems which took the builder's fancy or which are to indicate the owner's profession, such as the likeness of the wooden writing slate—the 'trade-sign' of the learned Koran-teacher. And then there are the naked, sober *katamba* of the simple craftsman or farmer, and the dilapidated, neglected, and roofless entrance huts of the poor. *Katamba* follows *katamba*, house follows house, as we walk along the road. Side-streets branch off, winding between the compounds, a maze of small streets and paths, which are often just wide enough for a man on horseback to pass through. Here and there the walls recede and give room to an open square with a few trees, a little grass or a patch of cultivated ground, where goats and sheep graze, children play, and a few men, sitting in the shade, enjoy the hours of leisure.

We pass a blacksmiths' quarter, easily known by the open forges with their many doors and small triangular windows all round the walls. A little off the road live weavers and bead-makers. The road opens into a large square. To the right is a market, one of the three big day-markets of Bida, noisy and crowded with people who are buying and selling: foodstuffs, firewood, cloth, small pots. To the left, occupying one whole front of the square, is the residence of the Masaba dynasty. Two small bronze cannons formerly flanked the entrance-hall as symbol of the royal might. In the centre of the square stands a small throne hall; it used to be a pretty building, with painted and decorated pillars all round. But to-day, only a year since the death of the last *Etsu* from this house, it is already in a state of disrepair and neglect which symbolizes, more convincingly even than the disappearance of the bronze cannons, the passing of royal power. Houses of nobility and high office-holders occupy the other sides of the square. Walking on, past the long wall of the royal residence, we come to the street of the brass- and silversmiths. At all hours of the day their forges are busy, but not too busy to greet you with a little flourish of hammering on their anvils. Their womenfolk are sitting outside the huts with baskets full of brass- and silverware in front of them, offering the products of the street to those who pass by.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52



A WOMAN TRADER SELLING HER HUSBAND'S SILVERWARE

342
415
443

A FOOD MARKET

482
443

[facing p. 330]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52
×796
795
●342
361

[p. 100]

[178]

10. The *zumácikă* medicine shrine in Jebba

11. Dressing the *mamma* masks

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

hand, are hardly larger than a *tunga* (see below). An *ezi* used to be encircled by a large wall, the ruins of which can still be seen in many places, which formed a protection from the dangers of war. Some Nupe villages of to-day have sprung from the amalgamation of smaller groups, fusing for purposes of protection against Fulani raiders.

To-day there is at least one small mosque in every Nupe settlement except in the riverain villages, while pagan shrines are concealed in the houses. All settlements have good wells and round roasting-ovens of red clay. A square of open booths forms the market. To the west of every village is an open space (*fiazo*) where corn is threshed.

An *ezi* usually has several *tunga* settlements or hamlets; Kutigi, for example, has six, founded between 1860 and 1910. The *tunga* are much smaller "daughter settlements" or "colonies" of the *ezi*. They seldom consist of more than three family groups (*emi*—see p. 31 above); they are less permanent than the "real" village, and lack the religious and ancestral bonds which tie a village to its locality. They have no separate markets or age-sets. *Tunga* settlements have been formed by groups moving out into the bush in search of new farmland; they are always referred to as the *tunga* of a certain *ezi* and rarely, if ever, develop into villages themselves. Close contact, intermarriage, and new emigration link a *tunga* with its *ezi*.

The ward (*efu*) is a sector of a large village or town and is made up of a number of compounds; except in some riverside villages they are often separated from each other by stretches of open land or cultivated fields studded with clumps of trees. Each *efu* has its own name, derived from a topographical peculiarity or a sociological feature, or from the origin of the inhabitants. The number of *efu* in an *ezi* varies; the old city of Bida had four, Doko has five.

The walled compound or "house" (*emi*), already mentioned with reference to its occupants, consists of a number of huts, mostly round, with very thin walls of clay and grass-thatched roofs. The high mud wall surrounding the *emi* opens upon a path or open space where there is a gateway or entrance hall to the compound, consisting of a larger hut known as *katamba*. The *katamba* is used as a meeting place for the men, as a guest house for strangers, or for the carrying out of part-time industries such as mat- or net-making. Within the *emi* are smaller partitions and a number of smaller *katamba* invisible from the outside. A chief sometimes has a larger and more imposing *katamba* with a high gabled roof and windows. Huts and entrance hall are often decorated with ornaments worked in relief into the clay. Signs of occupational specialization, such as a blacksmith's furnace, are sometimes found. A man and each of his wives has a separate hut.

Granaries (*edo*) which stand among the living-huts in the compound, are egg-shaped, raised off the ground, about 7 ft. high and 4 ft. in diameter, with thick clay walls and a grass roof. The opening is about halfway up one side and has a clay lid. There are also cylindrical ovens, 5 ft. high and 3 ft. wide, for drying bulrush millet and shea-nuts, and for making soap, outside the compound. These are communal property, owned by the women.

The Political System[3]

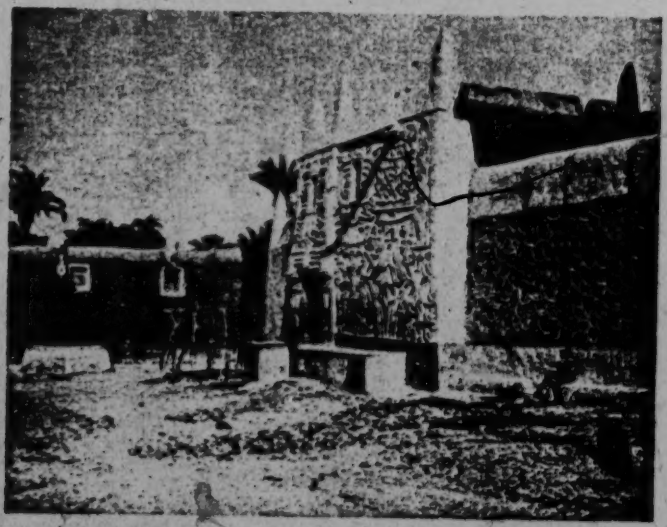
The political organization of the Nupe is centralized under the *Etsu* Nupe, who is the highest title-holder in a nobility graded by precedence but within which there is provision for promotion. Little is known of the system of kingship in pre-Fulani times, though some features from the ancient Nupe system doubtless survive in the original Nupe dynasty at Patigi. In former times there were ritual taboos in conformity with which the *Etsu* wore only white, ate food prepared only by his wives, and might not be seen eating by any stranger. The *ndahó gboyá* cult[4] for

[3] Nadel, 1942, pp. 87–91.
[4] See below, pp. 48–9.

6: Buchanan K-5 (ca. 1952)1953 MS12 Hausa MS12
Nupe FF52

N
342
351

Fig. 28—This scene in Bida, capital of the Nupe people, Niger Province, illustrates the rural character of many Nigerian towns.



H
342
531

Fig. 29—A traditional dwelling in Kano. The complicated ornamentation in relief is characteristic of urban architecture in the Sudan zone. Date palms in background.